

Urban Development in a Colonial Situation

Early Nineteenth Century Bombay

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Opium provided the Bombay bourgeoisie an important source of accumulation. This accumulation together with the capital which had become available through a strong indigenous presence in the commercial activity of western and central India could be channelised into industrial development at Bombay. This had its impact on urban development. From an urban sociological perspective Bombay is representative not so much of a colonial city with its colonial/indigenous spatial dualism but is an easily recognisable capitalist city with class differentiation determining its spatial pattern.

I

OVERWHELMED by the collective nostalgia of a people over whose empire once upon a time the sun never set, some popular works on Bombay revel in selective images of the city, choosing such landmarks and such moments in its history as might conjure pleasant memories for those who look back on the days of the British raj with longing.¹ While there might not seem to be much harm in such nostalgic evocations, one has to guard against the distortions that could be, and often are, introduced by allowing a desire for some of the aesthetically more appealing experiences of that era to become a desire for the days of the raj. Further, one must be careful that the ugly is not easily ignored. However much one might like to suggest that learning to play cricket and thinking "more or less in the European manner", gave to indigenous groups the wherewithal to participate in the economic development of Bombay on more or less equal terms with the British, and that this co-operation was responsible for the success story of Bombay,² the fact remains that the destiny of Bombay as a great commercial and industrial centre was born of its becoming an accomplice in the drugging of countless Chinese with opium, a venture in which the Indian business class showed great zeal alongside the British. This is the sordid underside of Bombay's colonial past.

Towards the end of the 18th century Bombay, having been drawn into the vortex of capitalist relations, was assigned its role in the world capitalist system. Through colonial manipulation Bombay was made the main spatial regulator, in western and central India, for the transfer of tribute to the metropolis. In the process the hegemony of capitalism was fomented in the city. In the case of an advanced capitalist country like Britain establishing a colonial relationship with regions in which the capitalist mode of production is not sufficiently developed, or not dominant, the problem of transition to capitalism is complicated by the fact that the colonial power seeks to create a mechanism for tribute

realisation which as loot/plunder/drug-trafficking may form a part of the prehistory of capitalism. To thus differentiate precisely between that aspect of the development of the colony which is strictly a part of this prehistory and that which constitutes the integration of the colony into the world capitalist system is not very easy.

The point is that colonial powers tried to subvert market relations whenever faced with stiff competition from the nascent bourgeoisie of the colony. It was not by superior business organisation but through extra economic intervention that indigenous competition was overcome. It has at times been suggested that the European East India companies represented a new type of business organisation in Asia. Decisions relating to a wide range of activities were taken centrally by these companies. K N Chaudhuri in his magnum opus, *The Trading World of Asia and the East India Company* (1978), considers the centralisation of the decision making process an important reason for the success of European companies in Asian trade:

The unique quality of English and Dutch trade with Asia, as conducted through joint stock companies, sprang from the attempt to impose a centralised and bureaucratically directed system of exchange and distribution on markets that were traditionally decentralised, fragmented and oriented towards individual efforts.³

As a management strategy centralisation had its uses particularly when markets were widely separated. But it was colonial political intervention that gave an edge to the English, as indeed the Dutch, East India Company.

The rise of capitalism is marked by commodity production and the end of production for mere simple consumption. In the colonial context the possibilities generated by production for exchange, production for the market, remain unrealised – blocked – in the absence of sufficient regular avenues for normal capitalist development. Intervention by the centre usually forces colonial surpluses out of the colony for appropriation by the centre or into wasteful (in a strictly capitalist sense) expenditure/consumption. Normal

capitalist development in the periphery is neither the intended objective nor the end result of colonial intervention. Hegemony for tribute realisation is the major aim. This hegemony and the plunder that it permits makes it difficult for capitalist development in a colony to be along the same lines as in the metropolis for 'if this were so, then despite the different starting point the end would be the same as at the centre'.^{4a}

In the early 19th century Bombay was fast acquiring an easily recognisable capitalist face. The city was well maintained in parts, it was squalid and congested in others. Population was expanding; there was growing functional specialisation and division of labour; relations of the market were penetrating day-to-day life; and class differentiation was cruelly apparent. Right at the outset it is necessary to point out that urban development cannot be understood without reference to a specific social formation. To view the urban development of 19th century Bombay without placing it within the wider framework of the development of capitalism and the intervention of colonialism would be a mistake. It goes without saying that colonial rulers brought to urban development in India certain features which were inherited from the historical evolution of cities in the metropolis.⁴ At the same time it has to be borne in mind that such features were inescapable insofar as colonial rule drew various urban centres in India into a network of capitalist relations. Indian cities on which the British left their imprint became less or more capitalist cities depending upon the extent to which capitalism was able to develop/not develop in them or in the region/s in which they were located.

In Bombay, just as in Calcutta, Madras, Simla, Ootacamund, etc, a pre-colonial city did not lie heavy on the colonial city. The organisation of space in colonial Bombay was therefore unencumbered by pre-determined usage. In Delhi, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Pune and other cities with a pre-colonial past the pattern of colonial urban development had to take into account space which had already been historically

appropriated.⁵ It was often difficult to internally modify the usage of this space to suit colonial requirements: the colonial city had to be located externally. The example of Delhi is instructive. Here colonial rulers created two 'external' cities, at different points of time. One was in the middle of the 19th century, especially after 1857-58, when the area outside Kashmiri Gate was developed as an exclusively British 'civil lines'. Beyond the 'civil lines', troops were quartered near the Ridge. This was the time when a belligerent Delhi was being subdued after the 1857 Revolt. Before 1857 also, however, the British had shown a preference for the area lying north of Lal Qila. The residency, St. James' Church, Ludlow Castle, Metcalfe House, etc., were all located in this direction. There appears to have been no radical departure after 1857-58, except that now the 'civil lines' was situated outside the walled city more completely. During the latter half of the 19th century 'urban Delhi conformed to the classical model of 'native city', cantonment and "civil station"',⁶ so characteristic of the colonial urban tradition in towns with a pre-colonial history. Then, after the decision to transfer the capital of British India from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, a new external city was built, this time on a grand scale, on the southern outskirts of the old city. Raisina village was to house symbols of occidental despotism and ample space intervened between the new city and the old.⁷ The one did not easily impinge upon the other and the ivory tower feeling of the viceregal residence was complete.

In those cities which evolved largely as a result of British initiative, colonial urban development did not merely have to be the other of indigenous settlement. As there had been no initial appropriation of space in these cities, it was possible for the colonial rulers to take up the most favourable locations which then became the nucleus and *raison d'être* of the city as a whole. Here too it would be inaccurate to talk of a uniform pattern. In the major colonial port cities, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, where defence against external enemies had initially been an important consideration,⁸ a fortified European settlement became the starting point of development. In these cities, however, a live economic and administrative contact with various indigenous groups was vital for the East India Company. Hence it was not feasible that the non-indigenous part of the city be completely detached and separate, permitting no interaction. Indigenous groups had to be allowed some access to a few prime locations either within or in the vicinity of the fort area. In hill-stations where the British did not look forward to any intercourse with the 'natives', and which had been built at a time when British rule was relatively secure, far greater

freedom in creating a non-indigenous environment was possible.⁹

There is, therefore, no such thing as colonial urban development in the abstract. Various urban centres were products of specific historical conjunctures. The sanatoria apart, for strictly speaking their historical role was very limited, urban centres of colonial India reflected variations in the level of capitalist development in different parts of the country. Spatial organisation therein was indicative of the relative strength or weakness of indigenous groups and their capacity to intervene in the control of urban space. The urban development of Bombay has to be seen in this context.

Here one might draw attention to the distorted nature of urban development which colonial rule set in motion. Urban centres developed or patronised by the metropolis in colonies often failed to generate economic activity concomitant with their expansion, since much of this expansion was often not the result of an organic growth but was related to specific colonial economic/military/administrative/strategic/political considerations. The hegemony of the colonial power placed it in a position to intervene arbitrarily in according primacy to a particular urban centre in a given region so that frequently artificial, imposed and unintegrated urban development took place.

BOMBAY: A BRITISH CREATION

Bombay as an urban centre is a British creation. It does not have much of a pre-colonial past. The subsequent greatness of the city should not tempt us to think in terms of the inevitability of its rise. True, Bombay possesses from the safety of its port a distinct advantage which was crucial to its emergence as a major commercial centre.¹⁰ However, Bombay has not always been very easily accessible from the surrounding parts of western and central India. For one, the Sahyadri mountains act as a barrier between the coast and the Deccan tableland.¹¹ The relative inaccessibility of Bombay from western and central India was reflected in its peripheral position in the context of the commercial network of the area well into the 19th century. In the middle of the 19th century when a railway network for western and central India with Bombay as its focal point was being contemplated, attention was drawn to the fact that the country to be traversed in going from western and central India to Bombay was "intersected by no navigable stream" and did not have "any of the facilities which good roads afford".¹² and dwelling on some of the drawbacks of the city's position, the *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* (July 10, 1840) noted in one of its issues that "Bombay unlike Calcutta, is not situated on the estuary of a hundred rivers,

and that its less favoured inhabitants have no rich alluvial plains like those watered by the Ganges, nor roads such as they have in Bengal".¹³

While the favourable situation of Bombay along the western coast equipped it for its development as a port, the geographical relationship of Bombay with western (and central) India was not a very close one. Few overland trade routes were directed towards Bombay. In fact down to the 18th century the main overland routes linking northern and central India with the Arabian sea terminated almost 300 km north of Bombay. The Gulf of Cambay was the main catchment area for goods flowing towards the west coast for overseas shipment.¹⁴ Cambay, Bharuch, Jambusar, Daman and Diu, and above all Surat, were the destinations of caravans arriving from Agra, Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, Navsari, Sironj, Ujjain, etc.¹⁵ A minor route, running south of Surat, stopped short of Bombay at Bassein.¹⁶ On the Konkan coast, Chaul, Dabhol and Vengurla supplied merchandise to Surat but the trade remained essentially coastal,¹⁷ the Konkan even today being relatively inaccessible by overland transport. To the east of Bombay, the western ghats prevented the interior of Maharashtra from being easily converted into a hinterland for Bombay. Consequently, Bombay was only a getting-off point for coastal trade and not a destination for overland routes. The insularity of Bombay was completed by (a) the fact that it was an island that was not adequately integrated with the mainland, and (b) possession by the Marathas, till the 1770s, of Bombay's large northern neighbour, Salsette.

Bombay was dependent on sea-borne trade even for its basic necessities. This contributed to enhancing the extrovert character of Bombay's economy from the time of British occupation. When Bombay came into the company's possession only a small portion of the island was in a state of cultivation.¹⁸ John Burnell, writing during the first decade of the 18th century made the following observation about the supply of food to the island:¹⁹

Cows are a scarce commodity on the Island, as in truth is every thing else of provision, we being beholden to our neighbours the Portuguese(sic) for almost every thing that we eat; otherwise we might starve, were we only to subsist on the production of the Island.

Though in decline, the Portuguese presence on the west coast was still quite visible in the early 18th century as is indicated by, among other things, 'the role of the Portuguese language as the lingua franca of all commercial intercourse in which Europeans took part'.²⁰ What is significant is that Bombay's reliance on the residual commerce of the Portuguese for providing

its inhabitants with articles of subsistence underscored the island's coastal and hence extrovert nature.

Moreover, the unassailable position of Surat as a major centre of foreign trade along with western coast of India for most of the 17th and part of the 18th century precluded the possibility of fully utilising the potential of Bombay even though the British were in possession of the island since the middle of the 17th century.²¹ Yet, the decline of Surat by the middle of the 18th century did not immediately open up opportunities for Bombay. As a matter of fact the transformation of the city into a major urban centre was slow and arduous. It is necessary to stand back a little and locate the problems of Bombay within the larger picture of western India rather than view them within the limited context of Bombay/Surat alone.

It would not be sufficient to talk in terms of the competition offered by Surat since the decline of Surat did not, and could not, by itself be the starting point of Bombay's rise. The factors leading to the decline of Surat were, after all, not specific to that city alone. They influenced the trade and economy of the north-western coast of India in general. Ashin Das Gupta's masterly study of the circumstances which led to a reversal in the fortunes of Surat has shifted the focus from reasons like the silting of river Tapi (on which Surat is situated), or the sack of the city by Shivaji in 1664 and 1670, often suggested to explain its decline. Das Gupta has argued that the decline of the city was the result of a particular conjuncture: the almost simultaneous waning of three great empires which had contributed to the immense prosperity of Surat in the first place – the Mughal empire in India, the Safavid empire in Persia and the Ottoman empire in the near east.²² The Red Sea and the Persian Gulf had become increasingly important for Surat merchants. The weakening of Safavid and Ottoman authority disrupted Surat's trade with West Asia. More crucial was the decline of the Mughals during the early 18th century.

Das Gupta has drawn attention to the adverse impact of the instability of the opening years of the 18th century on the economic activity of western India, and of Gujarat in particular. Political upheavals of the period brought to an end 'Mughal peace' and led to tremendous insecurity. Long-distance overland trade links which had given Surat access to distant centres like Agra, Lahore, Banaras, etc.,²³ were suddenly broken.

The large canvas within which Das Gupta has placed the decline of Surat allows us to see this phenomenon as one that was part of a general crisis in western Indian trade. If Surat, around which the economic life of the north-western coast of India had revolved,

failed to survive, could Bombay, with its peripheral geographical and economic position, be expected to make a sudden impact?²⁴

Bombay's coastal trade, which was largely in English hands, was also facing problems arising out of a shift during the first half of the 18th century in the focus of English commercial activities in India from the west to the east; to Madras and thence to Calcutta.²⁵ By the 1740s while there was on the one hand an increase in Bengal's Europe trade, with piece-goods, raw silk and saltpetre as the main commodities, on the other hand there was a downward trend in the Europe trade of Bombay and Surat.²⁶ Decline in the demand for indigo, an item which had hitherto been important in the English East India Company's import list, further contributed to the eclipse of Surat's Europe trade.²⁷ From the 1740s onwards trade between the west and east coast of India too tended to get neglected.²⁸ Holden Furber linked this decline of east coast - west coast sea-borne trade to a 'commercial revolution' in the mid-18th century 'when the conquests and rivalries of European powers fostered a rapid expansion of trade between India and China'.²⁹

Ultimately it was this very 'commercial revolution' which gave to Bombay its great chance. There is, however, a very crucial question of timing, both of the expansion of Bengal's eastward trade as well as that of the rise of Bombay. P J Marshall in his study of private British trade in Bengal has gone along with Furber in regarding the west coast trade to be in decline by the 1740s³⁰ – a point on which many of the writings of the last few decades on the subject are generally in agreement.³¹ However, while Furber had spoken of the almost simultaneous decline of western trade and growth of eastern trade,³² Marshall has suggested that the 'eastward trade was not providing substantial compensations until the 1770s',³³ i.e., that there was a gap of about 'thirty barren years'³⁴ between the two developments.

It might be useful to note this 30-year gap in the context of Bombay's rise. If one understands the inability of Bombay to take advantage of the decline of Surat as being the outcome of (i) a general crisis of the western Indian trade network caused by the decline of the Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman empires; (ii) decline in the Europe trade of India's west coast and (iii) Bengal's shift away from trade with the west coast; or in other words, the result of problems afflicting the foreign trade of western India as a whole, so that it would not be immediately possible for Bombay to race ahead at the cost of Surat, we must then allow some time for a new set of circumstances which could help Bombay to realise its potential to emerge. There was a lag, as Marshall observes, in the case of Bengal, where, by the 18th century, most

of the activities of the English East India Company were already centred. The lag was much more in the case of Bombay, which had to build its trading network and its spatial relationship with a hinterland almost from the scratch, as it were. As late as 1788 Lord Cornwallis found it incomprehensible that a huge establishment should be maintained at Bombay, "to load one ship in the year and to collect a very small revenue".³⁵ He noted with dismay that the company had "appropriated the whole surplus revenue of Benaras and Bahar (*sic*) to the support of Bombay", and yet was "obliged to send many lacs thither from Calcutta".³⁶

COTTON AND OPIUM TRADE

That the period after 1784 is critical for Bombay's 'take-off' has been suggested by Pamela Nightingale.³⁷ In 1784 Bombay's trade received a boost with the rise, she argues, in raw cotton exports to China. These were to pay for the English East India Company's increased purchases of Chinese tea, which in turn grew by leaps and bounds following Pitt's Commutation Act of 1784 which lowered the duty on tea.³⁸ Although there is no denying the significant role of raw cotton in the Bombay-China trade, a little circumspection is called for in regarding cotton as the commodity responsible for Bombay's breakthrough.³⁹ Raw cotton exports from India to China increased steadily but the search for the right commodity with which to exchange tea was far from complete. Raw cotton exports were not able to keep pace with import of tea from China.

The solution was eventually provided by opium, particularly in the 1820s when exports of opium from eastern India, which had already been rising constantly since the end of the 18th century, combined with large exports of opium from western India as well. This period saw a quantum leap in the value of opium imports into China (Table 1).

TABLE 1 : VALUE OF COTTON AND OPIUM IMPORTED INTO AND TEA EXPORTED FROM CANTON UNDER BRITISH FLAG, 1824-1833 (in Spanish dollars)

Season	Cotton (Imports)	Tea (Exports)	Opium (Imports)
1824	5,220,851	8,898,575	5,450,000
1825	6,227,740	9,087,104	9,782,500
1826	7,215,332	10,443,775	9,269,826
1827	5,787,299	9,163,052	11,243,496
1828	5,603,953	8,540,855	10,908,852
1829	5,080,100	8,236,568	13,450,924
1830	5,628,485	8,430,983	12,222,525
1831	4,931,243	8,520,863	11,304,018
1832	5,474,825	8,813,171	12,185,100
1833	6,726,739	8,712,701	11,618,716
Total	57,896,567	88,847,647	107,435,957

Compiled from: H B Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834* (Oxford, 1926). Vols. III and IV.

One would like to suggest that the rise of Bombay coincided with an 'opium miracle', and consequently that it would be appropriate to move forward the date of Bombay's ascendancy in western India to the second quarter of the 19th century. The question of timing is vital. It determines the nature of colonial hegemony in a given region. This hegemony far from being uniform is determined by the outcome of an actual struggle between, among others, dominant classes of the metropolis and indigenous groups. Even when there is collaboration, the terms of collaboration are decided by the strength/weakness of the one in relation to the other. An ongoing struggle settles the matter of strength/weakness. This is an obvious point, but needs to be particularly emphasised when we note the relatively greater capacity for intervention which indigenous groups at Bombay possessed. This had an important bearing on the configuration of power and hence control of urban space.

Bombay presidency was for long unable to generate sufficient resources to support its civil and military establishments and to finance its Gujarat and Malabar investments. In 1789 the supreme government estimated that Rs 56 lakh would have to be pumped into the presidency, an echo of Cornwallis' lament of 1788 cited above.⁴⁰ In the early years of the 19th century, Bombay was still chronically deficient. Fort William was not too pleased to learn from the Bombay government in 1801 that the deficit at that "Presidency for the current year 1801-02 will probably amount to Rupees 90,25,000."⁴¹

Lakshmi Subramanian's entire thesis of an 'Anglo-Bania alliance' in western India (Surat primarily) rests on the indispensability of western Indian 'sarrafs' in facilitating the movement of money from Bengal to the west coast of India.⁴² The liquidity crisis confronting Bombay presidency was surmounted by recourse to local credit. Discounting Bengal bills of exchange had become big business for the sarrafs by mid-18th century. Despite growing colonial penetration of the economy, which unfortunately Subramanian underplays, "implications of local credit intervention became more pronounced and its ramifications more extensive" in the last two decades of the century.⁴³

The issue was not merely one of finding an appropriate mechanism for the transfer of funds to Bombay. Bombay was a liability in a more fundamental sense. Lack of extensive possessions by the British in western India till the second decade of the 19th century prevented Bombay from carrying out the sort of mopping operation which the company had been engaged in within Bengal and Bihar since Plassey (and more so since the grant of 'diwani'), making

it difficult for Bombay to 'internally' finance its purchase of goods for consumption and re-export.

Perhaps the feature of economic activity in western and central India which illustrates, most vividly, the vigour of Indian enterprise in the region during the early 19th century is trade in opium. In the case of Bombay the significance of trade in this commodity derives from the capacity of Indian merchants to thwart attempts of the British Indian government to establish a monopoly of the Bengal type over opium in western and central India. They were encouraged in their truculence by the tacit or active support of numerous other indigenous groups ranging from Indian rulers in the region with their truncated authority to armed bandits. The divergent policies pursued with regard to the opium produce of Bihar, Awadh, etc, on the one hand, and that of Malwa, Rajasthan, etc, (Malwa opium), on the other, must be kept in view in the context of far-reaching implications which a non-monopolistic policy, forced on the British in western India, had on the development of Bombay.

Opium had opened up new possibilities for placing a hinterland at the disposal of Bombay. Various restrictions imposed on the export of Malwa opium from western India, beginning with Bombay Regulation I of 1805,⁴⁴ however inhibited the employment of Bombay's capital. Till almost 1830-31 the non-economic means employed to check Malwa opium trade only delayed Bombay's search for a hinterland by driving this lucrative enterprise away from the port and into independent, indigenously controlled avenues.

Right since the beginning of the 19th century Bombay merchants had large stakes in opium. Opium restrictions had forced them to break out of the confines of Bombay and participate in an active smuggling trade in partnership with Malwa, Gujarat and Rajasthan business groups.⁴⁵ Bombay traders could not possibly afford to give up such an important field of investment. They therefore went in for opium smuggling in a big way. The Bombay authorities had often pointed out to the supreme government that the capital at hand in Bombay would not be easily inclined to withdraw "from this profitable trade" though Bombay merchants "would, of course, much prefer buying every chest of opium in a fair and open manner, to the course they were by our measures compelled".⁴⁶

It was private, particularly indigenous, enterprise which took the lead in making Bombay the centre of the economic activity of western India. For its own survival Bombay's merchant class had to make the opium (and cotton) supplying areas of western and central India into a hinterland for Bombay. Towards the end of the 1820s

the Bombay government too, largely for reasons of revenue initially (though one should not ignore the traditionally strong links between the Bombay merchants and the Bombay government), was prepared to assist in this effort. Calcutta, to which the Bengal monopoly was of paramount concern, actually delayed the emergence of Bombay as the main centre for organising the colonial plunder of western and central India. It is no coincidence then that given this crucial role of Bombay's indigenous enterprise and its success in the fight against opium restrictions, its position could not be easily undermined when Bombay became the premier entrepot for Malwa opium after 1831.

It was almost inevitable that with the removal of restrictions on Malwa opium in 1831 and the concomitant expansion of trade in the commodity, spatially capital should have got concentrated at Bombay while western and central India fast became its hinterland. This spatial concentration was irresistible given that opium was primarily a commodity of external trade and Bombay with its outward looking aspect and its financial and other institutions was the most convenient location that could be available to indigenous enterprise for conducting the opium trade.

Opium provided to the Bombay bourgeoisie an important source of accumulation. This accumulation, together with the capital which had become available through a strong indigenous presence in the commercial activity of western and central India, could then be channelised into industrial development at Bombay. This would take capitalist development in Bombay to a new level through making it a centre of production.

During the latter half of the 19th century the major contradictions between indigenous enterprise and British interests at Bombay were played out in the arena of industry. The resistance of the early 19th century ensured continued participation of indigenous enterprise at Bombay, symbolised by Indian control over the city's cotton textile industry founded in the 1850s.

The distinctiveness of the western and central Indian colonial situation had its impact on the urban development of Bombay as a

TABLE-2: PERSONS PER HOUSE IN BOMBAY, 1826

Area	Persons Per House
Fort	11.2
Dongri	8.7
Byculla	7.2
Malabar Hill, etc	6.9
Girgaum	5.8
Mazagaon	5.25
Colaba	4.95
Mahim, including Worli, etc	3.6

Source: Calculated from *Census of Bombay, 1826*.

capitalist port city. From an urban sociological perspective Bombay is representative not so much of a colonial city with its colonial/indigenous spatial dualism, but is an easily recognisable capitalist city with class differentiation determining its spatial pattern.

II

The nucleus of early British Bombay was the Fort area, situated along the south-eastern tip of the original island of Bombay and facing the harbour. Commuting to the Fort area of Bombay was to gradually become a significant feature of the city's life as residential areas came up at some distance from it. To start with, the security which the Fort provided, coupled with its location near the harbour and docks made it not only a commercial and administrative centre but a residential area as well. Eventually the Fort became hopelessly overcrowded and as we shall see it required a major fire in 1803 for some planning to be contemplated. The physical geography of the part of Bombay in which the Fort was located permitted expansion only in one direction, that is, towards the north. South of the Fort, the narrow strip of Colaba and Old Woman's Island had very little scope. To the west of the Fort there was some open space, the esplanade, and beyond it Back Bay.

The esplanade was usually left unbuilt in colonial cities as a convention, mainly for military reasons. It was of the nature of a clearing outside the Fort 'intended to prevent any person approaching the town without being seen from the citadel'.⁴⁷ The grand public buildings on the eastern edge of Bombay's esplanade were not constructed before the latter half of the 19th century.

With growing congestion in the Fort area, the appropriation of land within it primarily for commercial use, and with relatively greater security, Malabar Hill with its extension Cumballa Hill became the fashionable residential area for the colonial rulers. This was the more so after the governor shifted his residence from Parel to a most enviable site on the edge of Malabar Hill, overlooking the sea. This area was not too far from, yet not too near, the hub of activity in the city.

North of the Fort and separated from it by the esplanade was the main indigenous habitation zone. This zone was, until its subsequent further expansion to the north, almost walking distance from the Fort and the docks where many of the Indians found employment. As business grew and got attracted to the Fort area, it made sense to live in this zone and thereby cut down on commuting time, a crucial consideration in an age when mass rapid public transport was non-existent. As it is, Bombay being an

island, expansion in all directions was out of the question. Moreover, during the 18th century the salt flats in the centre of Bombay island were still in the process of being reclaimed, delaying the dispersal of population over this area. When in the latter half of the 19th century Parel and the area beyond towards the north and upto the waterfront in the east developed as industrial centres, population got concentrated along a diagonal running roughly from Dongri to Worli. This diagonal was more or less equidistant from the factories lying to the north and north-east of it and the commercial centres lying south and south-east of it. All this was of course before Salsette was seriously developed into a suburb of Bombay.

Some figures pertaining to the population of Bombay during the early 19th century are available which, though they may not be entirely accurate, give us a broad idea of the demographic situation in this period. It was estimated in 1814 that the permanent population of the island "may now be taken at 1,80,000 souls".⁴⁸ The floating population was put at 60,000 making a total 2,40,000.⁴⁹ This was an appreciable increase over the figure for the last quarter of 18th century. In 1780 the population of Bombay was supposed to have been 47,170.⁵⁰ Already by the turn of the century there was a marked increase in the population of the city – or, at least, that was the general impression of contemporary observers. Maria Graham noted in 1809, shortly after the influx caused by a famine in the Konkan and Deccan, "I was informed that Bombay contains upwards of two hundred thousand inhabitants".⁵¹

POPULATION INFLUX

The influx seems to have been of a transitory nature. It certainly did not make Bombay a major centre of either production or consumption. When in 1805 Fort William was considering a plea made by the Bombay government for abolishing town duties, reference was made "to the limited consumption of the Town", owing to which "the amount realised from the Town duties at that Presidency" were "too inconsiderable".⁵² There was consequently no reason why the request should not have been acceded to. The supreme government hence recommended that the duties be abolished.⁵³

The movement of population towards the city confirms however that Bombay's coastal/shipping links were stronger than its (overland) links with its interior. This enabled it to avoid serious food shortages. Foodgrains could be imported via the sea. Bengal was a major supplier during the Konkan famine of 1803. Naturally a number of people afflicted by the famine sought succour in privileged Bombay (see Appendix A).

There is a likelihood that early population figures were inflated. This is made apparent by a census of Bombay taken in 1826 which put the total population at only 1,62,570, i.e., lower than the estimates for 1814.⁵⁴ In 1833 the population had risen to 2,34,032,⁵⁵ a crude rate of growth of 5.34 per cent per annum. Another census, taken on May 1, 1849, recorded 5,66,119 inhabitants.⁵⁶ By 1864, 8,16,542 persons resided in the city.⁵⁷ In other words the rate of growth of population between 1849 and 1864 had declined to 2.47 per cent per annum. Although as D R Gadgil had pointed out in the context of population statistics for Bombay that earlier counts appear to be over-estimates,⁵⁸ the general impression one gathers is that the 1830s and 1840s were a period of very rapid increase as compared to the 1850s and 1860s. The overall rate of growth between 1826 and 1849 was 5.57 per cent per annum. This rate of growth was higher than that which occurred from 1849-1864 (2.47 per cent per annum), as well as for the overall period from 1826 to 1864, 4.34 per cent per annum.

By the end of the first quarter of the 19th century the bulk of Bombay's population was to be found in Dongri, Byculla, Mahim, Girgaum and of course the Fort. Dongri and Byculla with 47,359 and 31,083 inhabitants respectively accounted for as much as 48.25 per cent of Bombay's total population in 1826.⁵⁹ However, the Fort area was still the most densely populated part of Bombay. It contained 13,611 persons in 1826⁶⁰ (as against 10,801 in 1813⁶¹), who resided in 1,219 houses, that is, about 11.2 persons to each house. Table 2 gives figures for persons per house in various parts of Bombay in 1826.

These figures do not include the military and floating population of Bombay, which was put at 10,000 and 20,000 respectively.⁶² It is unlikely that the floating population of

TABLE 3: NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED FROM BOMBAY, 1851

	English	Gujarati	Persian	Marathi
Daily	3	1	—	—
Bi-weekly	2	3	—	—
Weekly	4	2	2	1
Bi-Monthly	6	—	—	—
Monthly	3	2	—	—
Total	18	8	2	1

Source: BCGD, 1851, p 921.

Bombay would have easily found accommodation in the Fort, Colaba or Malabar Hill. This group would have mainly been dispersed over the indigenous zone thereby pushing up the density of those areas.

W H Sykes observed with reference to the 1849 census of Bombay that the "native town east of Bhendy Bazar contains more than two-fifths of the entire population of the Island".⁶³ Sykes further drew attention to the immense excess of males over females in Bombay, there being 3,54,090 males to 2,12,029 females in 1849.⁶⁴ One of the reasons for this was that "Bombay comprises a large number of seamen, workmen in dockyards, factories, etc, who come without their wives".⁶⁵

Bombay was eventually placed in an arbitrarily privileged position due to colonial intervention. As such it was able to attract a large population which could not always be efficiently utilised given Bombay's lack of hinterland and its weak links with the interior. Consequently there was bound to be a section of the population which could not be provided steady employment. At peak times, particularly during the sailing season, some of the casual labour was able to find work in dockyards, cotton screws, etc, but this labour would have been redundant for the remaining part of the year when it would be forced to leave the island or possibly look around for means of self-employment. Warden's impression was that one-fourth of the population of the island was 'floating' in 1814. This floating population comprised "Camatees, Ghatees, Carwas, Maharattas, Arabs, Persians and Goa Portuguese, a great part the seafaring men, with many Parsees".⁶⁶ These temporary residents remained in Bombay a few years, hoarded their earnings, "having saved from two to three hundred rupees, return to their native country, where they obtain as much land as they require".⁶⁷ Much of this casual labour therefore retained a strong connection with land, something which would have inhibited the process of creating a large wage-earning class. Till such time as colonialism tightened its grip on the western Indian countryside, the possibility of falling back on land would have definitely prevented complete degradation of this floating population of Bombay. This is in sharp contrast to, say, the casual labour of London, which had really no land to return to, and was, therefore, forced to submit to the most inhuman living conditions.⁶⁸ In England, of course, the appropriation of the countryside was extremely drastic and has never exactly been duplicated elsewhere.⁶⁹ In western India too the rural option was closed for urban dwellers once colonial exploitation led to a deteriorating agrarian situation. The fundamental difference was that in England agriculture

had been rationalised; in western India, as in India as a whole, or for that matter in other colonies the situation was the reverse.

In Bombay city itself the strength of indigenous enterprise, the transfer of the opium trade to the city, the vitality of commercial activity and industrial development did help in partially overcoming the problem. In 1826 the floating population of Bombay was, as we have noted, placed at 20,000, a sudden drop as compared to the estimates of 60,000 for 1814. Too much should not be read into the decline of this component of the population within the space of just 12 years. Firstly, total population placed at 2,40,000 in 1814 was 1,62,570 according to the count of 1826, which in turn may be explained to some extent by an overestimation of the earlier figure. Secondly, we are completely in the dark about the precise definition of the category 'floating population' for both years. In the absence of information about what criteria were adopted for classifying someone as belonging to this category, a proper comparison between these two figures cannot be made. Suffice it to say that there was a sufficiently large floating population in the city during the first quarter of the 19th century, which may have been showing a downward trend during the late 1820s as a result of new avenues that became available with increased economic activity in this period.⁷⁰

With the development of capitalism in Bombay it was necessary to ensure that those who came to the city did some work, even if it was something most dismal requiring much labour and yielding but a pittance. To be absolutely idle and unemployed, to give oneself up to vagabondage could mean taking to a life of petty-thievery. In a city where traditional ties did not exist, very much more so as Bombay had no pre-colonial past, the lack of such ties being underscored by market relations, little support from the community was forthcoming for anyone who had the misfortune of being totally without means of livelihood. Such a person might constitute a threat to property: he might rob, steal, burgle. This, capitalist society with its precise notions of property, does not tolerate. There were stringent provisions, therefore, in Bombay "for sending aliens off the island", particularly those who "live idle without work".⁷¹ Such persons could "be committed to jail, be flogged, and, upon a second conviction, upon production of the former record, they may be sent off the island".⁷²

LABOUR, PRODUCTION AND URBAN SPACE

The division of labour and production for exchange which capitalism presupposes and the encapsulation of this division of labour within urban space leads to a major

contradiction: while urban space must be appropriated for functions related to the accumulation of capital, this accumulation of capital is a negation of self-sufficiency and requires the apportioning of space for classes which live only by their labour. As economic activity gets concentrated in urban areas due to the convenience of finding there the necessary labour as well as the infrastructure – finance, banks, credit facilities, transport, expertise, etc, – needed for the accumulation of capital (which in turn reinforces this concentration), the contradiction mounts. There is a tendency to apportion as little space as possible to the poor. This is not merely a matter of land value, which is bound to go up with such concentration and which as adding to the cost of production is somewhat offset by the abundance of labour within the urban area, but is also a matter of not providing adequate amenities for the poor. It is, however, desirable to have a growing population of those who are willing to sell their labour power since this allows a large residual section which can be both casually engaged and recruited if there is any attempt on the part of any group of workers/wage-earners to exert pressure for improving their lot.⁷³

In a colonial situation even greater concentration occurred because an urban centre like Bombay was made the instrument of transferring the surplus of the surrounding hinterland to the metropolis and within this hinterland capitalist/industrial development was not encouraged. The territorial displacement of capitalism in 19th century colonial western India was complete as local urban centres were unable to develop. What we encounter is not a mere rural/urban dichotomy, which, incidentally is not an antagonistic one but an expression of a division of labour in society. We witness the appropriation of the hinterland for the benefit of the metropolis via a favoured urban centre, i.e., Bombay. Indigenous enterprise, which too was drawn to the infrastructure offered by the port speeded up this process of concentration by helping in the appropriation of the hinterland. Indigenous intervention even with its own possibilities of capitalist accumulation could not but accelerate the emergence of Bombay as the focal point of the economic activity of western India. Hence, the disproportionate concentration resulting from activities relating to (a) colonial plunder; (b) indigenous enterprise; and (c) lack of adequate urban and economic development of the hinterland areas. Lastly, Bombay, it should not be overlooked, was a major administrative centre.

Generally speaking the appropriation of urban space is not just functional, but determined by class. Specifically in the context of Bombay the contradictions between colonial interests and various

indigenous groups, and the relative strength/weakness of these groups *vis-a-vis* colonial rulers as well as the position of these groups *vis-a-vis* each other determined its spatial pattern. Once again it is necessary to reiterate that Bombay is not strictly representative of a 'colonial city' with the connotation the term has of colonial/indigenous spatial dualism.

It should not surprise us that in view of Bombay's marginality during the 17th and most of the 18th centuries there should not initially have been much pressure on space within the city. As a consequence it took some time before rights to land began to be asserted. One general observation must be made here. The question of space became vital for one area – The Fort – very early on. This was because the Fort provided security; it was the main administrative and commercial centre; it was located adjacent to the harbour; and the seven islands of which Bombay was formed were still in the process of being connected so that it was not feasible for habitation to be widely dispersed.

The year following the transfer of Bombay from the crown to the East India Company, an official proclamation (which remained a dead letter) stated that all acquisition of land by individuals prior to 1661 proceeded from imperfect right.⁷⁴ A few years later, in 1674, an important step was taken in the direction of the development of land as private property. Recognition was given to all the land then occupied, subject however to one condition. This condition was that occupants of land were liable to military service, the tenure being regarded as feudal.⁷⁵ Significantly an added provision was that occupants could not be deprived of their holding without compensation.⁷⁶ These arrangements were apparently applicable essentially to the Fort area, for in some of the other parts of Bombay – Girgaum, Chowpatty, Walkeshwar, Cumballa Hill and Mahim a tax called 'pension' was levied.⁷⁷ This was of the nature of an agricultural tax on garden or rice land computed "at so much per wheel for irrigation".⁷⁸ Although, according to Warden it would appear "that a very small part of the Island was in a state of cultivation" at this date,⁷⁹ technically these areas were not adequately urbanised.

In 1718 the pre-capitalist form (military service) which rent had taken in the Fort area was converted to a tax expressed in money, referred to as quit-rent.⁸⁰ This was really a tax for a service rendered by the state, rather than a rent on land. No argument in terms of a superior right to land was put forth. Quit-rent was legally only a reimbursement for expenses incurred in erecting fortifications.⁸¹ To put it differently, it was a tax for providing security. Since it was the Fort and the surrounding area which benefited

from these fortifications, the tax applied to land in the Fort, Colaba, the 'Black' Town and the New Town. The 'Black' Town and the New Town refers to the indigenous zone lying north and north-west of the Fort.⁸²

By the 1730s efforts began to be made to assert superior rights of the colonial rulers to land. This was obviously the easiest way to exclude, or at least limit indigenous access to land. Growing pressure must have been a cause for worry. Indians were preempted by a discriminatory taxation policy. A resolution of 1731 drew a distinction "between the English and black inhabitants".⁸³ This policy did not deter Indians from acquiring landed property on an extensive scale in Bombay, a situation to which the strength of indigenous enterprise contributed in no small measure. In 1803, as we shall see, another attempt was made to undermine indigenous control over land in the Fort. The attempt proved to be futile. By the second decade of the 19th century there seems to have been an all round strengthening of property rights along capitalist lines with reduced colonial arbitrariness. Such colonial arbitrariness acts as a serious limitation to the proper exercise of bourgeois right by discriminating essentially along racial rather than class lines. In 1814 Warden advocated the further strengthening of private property.⁸⁴ In that year the right of tenants to inherit and alienate land was also accepted.⁸⁵

The Fort area being the focus of Bombay's economic world, the actual outcome of the conflict between colonial rule and indigenous capitalism in Bombay was mirrored in that small strip of land. Just as the British were unable to completely overcome opium smugglers so too they could not prevent Indian merchants from gaining a foothold in the Fort area. Moreover, if Bombay's bourgeoisie was an important participant in the commercial life of the city its desire to be in close proximity to that infrastructure which colonial interests had spatially concentrated in the Fort was but natural. It would not be out of place to state here "that in 1707-8 the greater part of the ... Fort was private property; ...[and] that, for the purchases made from 1707-08 to 1758-59, it became the Company's and was subsequently transferred to individuals".⁸⁶ What this implies is that as by the beginning of the 19th century Indians were substantial owners of property in the Fort they must also have been involved in these large-scale purchases made during the latter half of the 18th century. Investment in real estate increased in this period: "the greatest portion of the property will be found to have been created since the year 1758".⁸⁷

In 1803 a major fire broke out in the Fort.⁸⁸ DE Wacha recalled in his reminiscences that he had heard from his grandmother 'in the

1950s what a terrible catastrophe it was. At the time the news of fire, large or small, was one to fill the citizens with extreme consternation, for it meant, in nine cases out of 10, total destruction of life and property".⁸⁹ The fire became an occasion for trying to oust Indians from the Fort. This is understandable when we consider that land values in the Fort escalated shortly after the fire. Just before 1803 the price of land had been on average from eight to 12 rupees per square yard. Subsequently to 1803 land in the Fort was selling at prices ranging between Rs 16 and Rs 30 per square yard.⁹⁰

A town committee was appointed following the fire ostensibly "to investigate the nature of tenures" in tracts laid waste by the calamity.⁹¹ Under the garb of examining the nature of tenures in the Fort, the committee sought to obstruct reconstruction of indigenously owned buildings.⁹² This was met with stiff resistance by Indians. They were not prepared to accept this threat to their right to reside and own property in the Fort. Though the town committee attempted "to carry their plans into effect, as well by threats as by persuasion", the "natives ultimately succeeded in their opposition, and in the object of rebuilding on their old foundations".⁹³ Even the Court of Directors concurred in "permitting a native town within the Fort".⁹⁴

We find Hormajee Bomanjee constructing his family residence in the Fort during the first decade of 19th century at an estimated expense of one and half lakhs of rupees.⁹⁵ Ardaseer Dady owned four buildings in the area.⁹⁶ Mottichund Amichand had his premises in Bazargate Street.⁹⁷ Besides, Cursetjee Manockjee, Kesowdass Ransordass, Moosa Mapla and Pestonjee Bomanjee also owned land in the Fort during the first quarter of the 19th century.⁹⁸ Coercion having been unsuccessful, Indians were induced in this period to exchange land held in the Fort for large tracts of ground in Salsette, which was still in an undeveloped state.

INFORMAL SEGREGATION

Within the Fort itself there was some informal segregation. Indians clustered around the northern part of it whereas "in the southern part ... congregated the official European population".⁹⁹ Little planning had gone into the development of the Fort.¹⁰⁰ In the late 1820s it conveyed the impression "of a large irregular village than of a town".¹⁰¹ Writing in 1809, Maria Graham had observed that the Fort was "Dirty, hot, and disagreeable, particularly the quarter near the bazar-gate, owing to the ruins of houses which were burnt down some time ago, and have never been removed; but new buildings are in many places rising on the broken fragments of the old, so that the

streets are become so uneven as to render it disagreeable if not dangerous, for carriages to pass through them".¹⁰²

The bazar-gate was located at the northern end of the Fort, in the area where the indigenous inhabitants resided. The houses of Indians within the walls were "closely crowded together, very high, and mostly built of wood".¹⁰³ The fact that they were made of wood must have added to the risk of fire. If even after the fire of 1803 wood continued to be so much in use as building material, bricks and stone must have been difficult to procure. As it is the expenses of building were great, owing partly to the high cost of labour, and accounted "for the apparently moderate profit enjoyed by the builder".¹⁰⁴ Hence, probably, the extensive use of wood. The wooden houses in the fort "with their wooden verandahs, venetian blinds, and heavy sloping roofs, covered with tiles" had a 'Swiss rather than Oriental appearance'.¹⁰⁵ The absence of chimneys in these houses caused 'them to look as if they were so many warehouses'.¹⁰⁶

There were certain physical limits beyond which it was not possible to go on adding buildings within the Fort area. By the end of 1820s "substantial buildings [extended] to very nearly three miles from the Fort".¹⁰⁷ Some efforts were made to relieve the congestion in the Fort area, though not always with much success. In the period after the fire, Indians had been persuaded "to limit their houses in respect to height and taking off from each front a portion of ground for widening the streets".¹⁰⁸ Then in 1839, legislation pertaining to building construction in Bombay, Act No XXVIII, laid down that no building with a height extending 50 feet could be erected within the walls of the Fort.¹⁰⁹ Yet as late as the 1860s, the authorities noted that, "The Fort has hitherto been strictly limited by its ramparts...., but while its lateral extension has been prevented, there has been no restriction as to the number of storeys that might be added to houses".¹¹⁰

South, north and west of the Fort there was some open space. This could not be used for expansion partly for physical and partly for strategic reasons. Colaba and Old Women's Island were not fully integrated with Bombay till quite late.¹¹¹ Colaba was initially a cantonment area, although towards the beginning of the 19th century it was opened up for civilians.¹¹² The proximity of Colaba to the Fort, its spaciousness and fine view soon made it prime land. In 1805 the East India Company paid Rs 60,000 for purchasing eight houses in Colaba.¹¹³

The large expanse of the esplanade merging with the sea on one side and with the indigenous zone on the other provided, apart from its strategic significance which has already been alluded to, much needed escape from the claustrophobia of the Fort. It was

a place where one could go for a breath of fresh air, for some recreation and for some exchange of gossip. Even in the third quarter of the 19th century the esplanade retained its calm. Despite the railway, textile mills, the cotton boom and rise in population the pace of life was still unhurried along the esplanade. Wacha gives a most vivid description of pleasant evenings spent here during the 1850s: "...squatting groups would be seen merrily playing games of cards... Refreshments were also vended. The only refreshment was the sugar-cane, stripped of its bark and cut into small cylindrical pieces which again would be subdivided into four. A large number of vendors, also Parsis, selling this fruit... moved from group to group..."¹¹⁴ Further,

the grounds on which now stand the Post Office... and the High Court were also utilised for recreation purposes, but evidently it was dedicated to the 'shettia loque' or the wealthier of the Parsi community. Members of this class, too, frequented the maidan and had their little groups - only these were a little more exclusive... These, too indulged in the luxury of 'ganderi' and also of confectionery...¹¹⁵

It is pertinent that the esplanade was not appropriated exclusively for the use of colonial rulers.

Malabar Hill comes closest to King's concept of 'colonial settlement' in colonial urban centres as an area where the European civilian population resided and from which indigenes were almost entirely excluded.¹¹⁶ Indians, however, owned a lot of land in this area as well. Framjee Cowasjee "owned a few bungalows there"¹¹⁷ as did Hormusjee Cursetjee, son of Cursetjee Manockjee one of the prominent owners of land in Bombay whose property in the Fort has already been referred to above.¹¹⁸ Kemp and Company had their medical dispensary in Malabar Hill in premises rented from Hormusjee Cursetjee's widow, Meheribai.¹¹⁹

Owning property in Malabar Hill was one thing but residing there was another. For Indians to stay there was not the done thing. In the 1840s "the healthy eminence of Malabar Hill was quite untenanted by any Parsees".¹²⁰ Houses owned by Parsis "were without exception occupied by Europeans".¹²¹ When in 1848 Meheribai decided to shift to Walkeshwar, the step caused an outcry which obviously had some sexist overtones as well: "The Parsee Punchayet the body conducting the social governance of the Parsee community, gave it out as their grave opinion, that it was anomalous for a Parsee lady to live in such an out-of-the-way locality".¹²² This exclusive quarter extended almost upto Breach Candy at the northern extremity of Cumballa Hill. Breach Candy soon became "the general rendezvous of the English community, where they met to settle

the politics of the island, and to discuss the affairs of the day..."¹²³

Class differentiation in Bombay was most sharply delineated in moving from the rarefied atmosphere of Malabar Hill, Walkeshwar, Cumballa Hill and Breach Candy to the Native Town north of the Fort. Here too as the demand for housing increased with the rise in population during the early 19th century, the value of land went up. Those who owned land took "all possible advantage of the area in their possession by building to its full depth" and "raised floor upon floor".¹²⁴ Moreover, "some owners of plots of ground which have a frontage such only as may have been sufficient for a huckster's stall before the street attained to its present importance, have built with this small frontage, but with a greatly disproportioned depth, houses of many floors".¹²⁵ Consequently the overcrowding was oppressive. Dwellings were at times constructed by filling a wooden framework with brick and mortar or rubble masonry. In the poorer streets the walls were made entirely of wood. This rendered the structures insecure as was "shown in the many accidents that have resulted from falling houses in the 10 years ending with 1862. Besides many being maimed, there were 69 killed in that time".¹²⁶

Congestion in the indigenous zone was in direct proportion to the concentration of economic activity in the Fort. In the absence of an even spacing of economic activity it was natural that those who had only their labour power to sell could not be widely dispersed but had to be as close as possible to the area which could provide them work. As Indian enterprise too tended to get concentrated in the Fort, reinforcing the economic significance of the area, the spatial disorientation of Bombay was ensured. We have also noted that Bombay during the first quarter of the 19th century could not efficiently utilise its large population. The fact that the Fort area was not a producing zone, rendered Bombay's labour even more underemployed. This meant that many were forced to be self-employed as petty-shopkeepers, hawkers, vendors, etc. It was possible to sustain oneself to a limited extent on this kind of activity since Bombay's wage-earners had to buy the necessities of daily life. Maria Graham recording her impressions of a visit to a Bombay bazar wrote:

Here you see grain of every description heaped in earthen jars; there, sweetmeats of all sorts and shapes, ... Further on, fruits and vegetables are laid out to the best advantage; then you come to the paung, or betel leaf, nut and chunam, ready for chewing, or the separate materials; beyond are shops for perfumes, linens, oils, toys, brass and earthenware...¹²⁷

So very extensive did this variety of economic activity related to vending articles of daily necessity become that the Bombay authorities sought to impose a tax on shops and stalls. Act XI of 1845 provided "that it shall be lawful for the collection of Land Revenue of Bombay to make a Quarterly Assessment on each and every shop and stall within the Island of Bombay and Colaba".¹²⁸ The types of shops and stalls listed convey some idea about the nature of business in articles of daily necessity: Apothecary (Country), Bakers, Bread Sellers, Betelnut Sellers, Curds and Cream Sellers, Darners, Dinner Leaves Sellers, Onion, Garlic, Ginger, Potatoes and Yam Sellers, Pickle Sellers, Rice Sellers and, Tea and Sugar Sellers. (*Bombay Calendar and General Directory*, 1849 (BCGD), p 252).

The Native Town must also have had some autonomous economic activity, but this being on too small a scale and at a very low level, ultimately dependence on the Fort was crucial. This desperate dependence on the Fort must have been another factor in the disproportionate concentration in that area.

Such a situation in the main indigenous zone and the Fort led to unhygienic conditions. Until the lower classes could improve their bargaining position, little development of proper civic amenities for the poor took place. A H Leith, as deputy inspector-general of hospitals in Bombay, in a report of 1864 on the sanitary conditions in the city, reported that in a particular street "the houses on each side were of two or three floors, and the various rooms were densely peopled, and the floors of the verandahs were fully occupied, while to eke out the accommodation in some of the verandahs there were charpaees or cots slung up and screened with old matting to form a second tier of sleeping places for labourers that were employed in the day".¹²⁹

In one of the chawls that Leith visited, he found "... in a narrow unpaved court, which was wet with the waste water of a well round which the people were bathing, there was a cesspit full of filth: in the same enclosures there was a row of necessities behind which there was an unbuilt trench full of fluid excreta and foul water, the over-flowings of which passed along the base of the wall surrounding the mouth of a well that was but four feet from the privy. This well supplied its owner's household with drinking water. In this Chal there were ten cholera deaths".¹³⁰

Elsewhere he was led to latrines where "baskets which cannot retain liquid are used under the privy-seats, and those privies have a flat floor, and... as is often the case, not even a basket is used, and a sweeper never visits the place, but the accumulated soil is left to flow out on the pavement of the gullee..."¹³¹

Under the circumstances, frequent outbreaks of epidemics particularly of cholera were only to be expected. In the early 19th century three major outbreaks of cholera occurred: in 1831-32, in 1848-49 and in 1853-54. In 1849 cholera deaths were 18,036 while in 1854 approximately 20,000 people were estimated to have died of the disease.¹³²

The abysmal sanitary conditions prevailing in the Fort and to a greater extent in the Native Town were bound to result in the contamination of drinking water thus leading to cholera and other contagious and water-borne diseases. The shortage of water supply compounded the problem. Even British inhabitants had at times to procure water from distant sources. An entry of 1825 in Lady West's journal states, "we had 63 bottles filled yesterday at the Caves of Elephanta for drinking".¹³³ Repeated monsoon failures between 1824 and 1850 led to the drying up of the 136 public wells and tanks on which the inhabitants were completely dependent for their supply of water. By 1854 only eight of these wells and tanks contained good, potable water.¹³⁴

In the 1850s a major project for the supply of water was under consideration in Bombay. The project was to be financed largely through an increased house tax.¹³⁵ Mariam Dossal's detailed study of this project has shed light on an important facet of this issue. The wealthier Indians led by Jamshetji Jejeebhoy, were not favourably inclined towards the project as they would have had to "submit to a heavy tax for such works".¹³⁶

The matter was one of class interests. Privileged indigenous groups were not keen to provide amenities to the deprived sections if there was to be increased taxation. It might seem a contradiction that whereas the affluent sections tried to stall the move, it is the colonial state which was in this case taking the initiative in improving civic amenities. Enzo Mingione in his work on capitalist urban problems has pointed out that, "As the taxation system is based on residents,... any change discourages capital accumulation because it becomes - one way or another - a direct taxation of economic activities".¹³⁷ From the point of view of Bombay's capitalist class the question was whether it would be prepared to bear the high costs of urbanisation. In an overall situation of colonial constraints to accept this responsibility would have further reduced their scope for capital accumulation. One must recall here that indigenous investment in Bombay's housing and real-estate was extensive.

Life in the Native Town and Fort during the early 19th century must have been a miserable one. This was the more so as with the growing stability of British rule, security and overcrowding, the English inhabitants

of Bombay removed to the more fashionable areas of Colaba and Malabar Hill, abandoning the Fort to commerce, and middle and upper class Indians. Of course there were still European residents in the southern part of the Fort, but what one is referring to is a tendency.¹³⁸

North and central Bombay did not come into their own until the industrial era. Just north of Dongri along the sea was Mazagaon. In 1826 it had a population of 4,696.¹³⁹ Maria Graham referred to it at the beginning of the century as "a dirty Portuguese village".¹⁴⁰ Even today there is "a very Portuguese air to Mathaparkard, the small settlement that nestles quietly in the heart of busy Mazagaon".¹⁴¹ Not being very far from the Native Town or even the Fort, and due to its importance as a ship-building centre, Mazagaon was a settlement of some importance in the early 19th century.

Several portions of north and central Bombay had been reclaimed only during the early 18th century.¹⁴² Having been reclaimed largely at government expense, the land had been let out to individuals, mainly Indians, for improvement. Most of this land was of the nature of salt marshes, and was designated 'foras'.¹⁴³ Foras (lit. 'out of doors') denoted rent "paid by a cultivator or person permitted to occupy ground for the purpose of improving it".¹⁴⁴ Large tracts of Byculla, Parel, Worli, Mahim, Dadar and Matunga were foras lands.¹⁴⁵ With the rising value of land in Bombay, the government tried to undermine the rights of holders of foras at the beginning of the century.¹⁴⁶ At the same time the company contemplated an increase in rent, "but the holders of these grounds strongly resisted".¹⁴⁷ Eventually "the measure of increasing the rents was suspended, and the matter referred to the Hon'ble Court of Directors in 1815".¹⁴⁸ The matter was settled for the time being with titles of those "persons who were in possession in the year 1744" being recognised in perpetuity.¹⁴⁹

The question of rights was reopened in the 1830s. In 1836 the construction of a major thoroughfare in central Bombay, passing through foras lands, was projected.¹⁵⁰ This thoroughfare, Grant Road, now Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, forming a junction with Girgaum Road was to have an east-west alignment. In 1838, work on the road commenced and the foras lands through which it passed were acquired without any compensation being paid.¹⁵¹ Rapid expansion of the city and the construction of Grant Road must have further increased the value of land in central Bombay. In the 1840s we find leading merchants like Juggonath Sunkersett and Bomanjee Homasjee investing in land in the Tardeo and Grant Road area.¹⁵²

Parel, where also several foras holdings were located, had been a favoured resort in

the 18th century. The governor had his residence here which with preference being increasingly shown for Malabar Hill was abandoned during the course of the 19th century. The threatened northward expansion of the indigenous zone and the overall southward shift of the European residential zone – Colaba and Malabar Hill – completed the eclipse of Parel. Some upper class Indians did continue to have their country residences in Parel during the 19th century, the most well-known being Pestonjee's 'Lal Baug'. The famous Lowjee family, it might be mentioned in passing, had been given 'inam' or cess-free grants in Parel and adjoining Naigaum in 1783.¹⁵³ In the latter half of the 19th century this area became mainly an industrial zone.

MAHIM AND SALSETTE

Mahim had been an important settlement since the Portuguese days and was the most thickly populated area in north Bombay at the beginning of the 19th century. Mahim was estimated to have 13,726 inhabitants in 1760.¹⁵⁴ In 1826 the population of Mahim (including Worli) was 17,713.¹⁵⁵

During our period Salsette, the large northern neighbour of Bombay, was still a backwater. It is only towards the end of the 19th century, particularly with the improvement of communications, that Bombay began to spill over into Salsette. Salsette was to become an 'umland': the 'umland' of a city being that portion of the surrounding country which is linked with the city as a centre.¹⁵⁶ As Bombay's physical geography permitted only northward expansion, the merger of Salsette with Bombay was inevitable.

Salsette had been one of the earliest additions to the Bombay presidency. It was "at the time of its acquisition much depopulated and scantily cultivated".¹⁵⁷ With the growth in demand for food in Bombay, Salsette was sought to be better cultivated. Leases were granted on favourable terms to attract settlers.¹⁵⁸ Bishop Heber refers to vegetables grown on Salsette being brought to the Bombay market.¹⁵⁹ At the same time Heber noted that the island was "strangely unimproved having no towns except Tannah and Gorabunder (the first of which is indeed a neat and flourishing place, the other not so much better than a poor village)".¹⁶⁰ He went on to say: "This neglected and uncivilised state of Salsette is all the more remarkable,... because the neighbourhood of Bombay, and the excessive price of provisions there, would seem to lead to the cultivation of every inch of ground".¹⁶¹ Finally, Heber remarked that, "The population, however, poor as it is, and chiefly occupied in fishing, amounts to 50,000, a number which might be trebled if cultivation

were extended at anything like the rate which it has been done in Bengal".¹⁶²

The main reason why the supposed capacity of Salsette remained underutilised was that cultivation called for a large investment. According to a report of 1836 one of the major obstacles in the development of Salsette was "the nature of the soil itself, which is not capable of being made productive without the constant and unceasing aid of expensive appliances".¹⁶³

There is one sense in which Salsette was tied to the economy of Bombay in the early 19th century. It provided a field for investment in land. Several prominent merchants of Bombay had been granted holdings in Salsette in this period, some of which had been given in exchange for land in the Fort.¹⁶⁴ Ardesar Dadaji had been granted the villages of Malhar, Dysar, Magatney, Tulsi, Areyn, Eksar, Kanari and part of Pahadi in lieu of land in the Fort. Hormasjee Bomanjee had similarly been given the villages of Kurlen, Maroli, Asalpay, Kolikalian, Mohili, Parajpor and Shahar (collectively referred to as the Kurla estate).¹⁶⁵ Some of the other prominent landowners in Salsette were: Cursetjee Manockjee (Anik); Dhakjee Dadajee (Varsavay); Framjee Cawasjee (Poway estate), Jamsetjee Bomanjee (Vila Parla, Jhu); Kharsetjee Cowasjee (Goregaum); Ratanjee Eduljee (Gatkopar); Krushnarao Raghunath (Borvday); and Luxmon Hurrichanderjee (Chincholi).¹⁶⁶

It would seem that some of the indigenous investment in Salsette was of a speculative nature. It was rare for Bombay merchants to go in for investment in agriculture.¹⁶⁷ One of those occasional instances is that of Framjee Cawasjee who tried to introduce scientific agriculture on his Poway estate. The relatively greater stability of indigenous enterprise in Bombay did not incline Indian merchants towards large investments in agriculture. Urban real-estate, over which they already had significant control (Pestonjee Bomanjee boasted to Maria Graham "that he received not less than Pond 15,000 a year in rents and his brother received nearly as much"),¹⁶⁸ held greater attraction for them.

The development of capitalism in Bombay was not only expressed in the specific spatial pattern of the city but also in the availability of certain facilities and services so characteristic of a capitalist city, especially a major administrative and commercial centre. To some extent such facilities were the outcome of Bombay's privileged position within the colonial scheme of things: systematic appropriation requires an infrastructure.

In the context of early 19th century colonial Bombay the growth of specialisation could at times be deceptive, especially at the lower level. The non-manufacturing nature of

Bombay in this phase must have, as we have already noted, led to a number of people becoming hawkers, vendors, small-shopkeepers, carriage drivers, palanquin-bearers, etc. Unfortunately our information is limited to those services and facilities which were usually availed of by the English or upper class Indian inhabitants of Bombay.

There were, by the late 1830s and early 1840s several hotels, coffee-shops, eating houses and confectioneries in the city. In contrast to the situation at the beginning of the century when Maria Graham lamented that "there is but one tavern in Bombay and... that is by no means fit for the reception of ladies",¹⁶⁹ and a similar statement by Mrs. Elwood in the late 1820s that "... it is most singular that there are no hotels to which a lady could with propriety go",¹⁷⁰ several hotels came up between the late 1830s and early 1850s: Victorial Hotel, Hope Hall, British Hotel, Madam Costa, Royal Family and Benson Hotel.¹⁷¹ The hotels proclaimed their respectability by announcing the availability of accommodation for 'Families and Gentlemen'.¹⁷² These hotels were not exclusively European owned but had indigenous involvement as well. Victoria Hotel in Apollo Street had, for instance, Nasserwanjee Cooverjee as one of its owners.¹⁷³

The Shop and Stall Tax of 1845 differentiated between two kinds of eating houses. Eating houses for Europeans on which the quarterly assessment was Rs 4, and ordinary eating houses (apparently for non-Europeans) on which the tax was one rupee.¹⁷⁴ The implied segregation is significant. A similar type of establishment referred to in the list pertaining to the Shop and Stall Tax is the coffee shop.¹⁷⁵

The taste for European confectionery was not limited to the British residents alone, but had percolated down to some indigenous sections as well. Indians were also engaged in vending this kind of confectionery. Dhunjeebhoy Framjee's bakery was one of the well known establishments in the early forties.¹⁷⁶ In the forties itself Rustomjee Framjee was one of the two 'ice-confectioners' in Bombay, the other being a European.¹⁷⁷ Wachha tells us of "a Parsi who had a bakery in Barrack Lane" in the 1850s. A shop, familiarly known as 'Bahadurji's Bakery' "had the custom of the rich and middle class Parsis", while another 'humbler confectioner of the Military Store Lane supplied the needs of the lower classes'.¹⁷⁸

At a more mundane level, we have seen that the supply of food to Bombay had been taken care of largely through sea-borne trade. For highly perishable commodities like vegetables and fruits, however, local production was necessary. Among the vegetables grown in Bombay were brinjals, bhindi, various types of gourds, and sweet potatoes.¹⁷⁹

Peas and beans were also grown but were of 'indifferent quality'. Not much success had attended planting of cabbage, carrots and turnips. There was some specialised horticulture also.¹⁸⁰ Bombay was famed for its onions;¹⁸¹ Mazagaon for its mango.¹⁸² Finally, some rice was still cultivated on the island in the early 19th century.¹⁸³

As settlements got dispersed over the island, the demand for transport also increased. Buggies, carriages, carts, palanquins, etc. were available for hire.¹⁸⁴ The rise in their number necessitated legislation to regulate such transport. Act No IV of 1841 allotted specified parking places (stands) for public vehicles and palanquins.¹⁸⁵ The phenomenal rise in utilisation of road space can be gauged from the following statement pertaining to the 1860s:¹⁸⁶

As many as 598 carriages in addition to bullock carts were counted passing along the Bhendy Bazar in one hour, and as there were 4,500 foot passengers for whom there are no foot paths, the danger to life is very great and many accidents occur.

The newspaper has been projected by R E Park as one of the hallmarks of modern urban life. It is, in his words, "The great medium of communication within the city, and it is on the basis of the information which it supplies that public opinion rests. The first function which a newspaper supplies is that which formerly was performed by the village gossip".¹⁸⁷ In Bombay during the 1830s and 1840s there had been a steady rise in the number of newspapers published from the city. By 1851, 29 newspapers were being published in four languages – English, Gujarati, Marathi and Persian:

Finally, there was the seamier side of Bombay. Petty crime in the city was the obverse of a flourishing commerce in opium. J P Grant, judge of the King's Court in Bombay, delivering an address in 1828 stated that, "Daring robberies are perpetrated within the walls of the fortified town by gangs - goods are conveyed to the ramparts and lowered down by ropes attached to the guns of the fort".¹⁸⁸ Crime had brought with it a police force. Bombay in the 1830s had a senior magistrate, a junior magistrate, a superintendent of police and a high constable. There were three police divisions – Fort, Byculla and Mahim – each with a head constable.¹⁸⁹

This police force, along with the judiciary, became the instrument for safeguarding bourgeois property against pilferage and theft. Punishment was harsh: confinement, banishment, torture. In the Petty Sessions "the infliction of punishment by rattan" was "a very common sentence" during the 1820s.¹⁹⁰ Lashing was "attended with extraordinary severity, drawing blood at every stripe, and sometimes taking off with it small pieces of flesh".¹⁹¹ While upper class

Indians served on juries or were appointed justices of peace, the poorer sections were the victims of such brutal methods of punishment. The scars caused by lashing which were "never obliterated but by death" could be observed "on many a native as he toils along the streets of the town under the burden of a palanquin".¹⁹²

The pattern of Bombay's intercourse as it had developed by the beginning of the 19th century is perhaps best illustrated by the contrast between the situation in Bombay on the one hand and the Deccan and Konkan on the other during the famine of 1803.^a While shortages overtook the Deccan and Konkan, Bombay was in a position to support a growing population which flocked to the city to seek food and employment there in the wake of the famine.^b A perusal of records pertaining to this period, especially for the year 1804, leaves one in no doubt that by the early 19th century Bombay had an extensive sea-borne trading network for supply of grain to it. The Konkan was one of the major sources for the supply of grain to Bombay by the middle of the 18th century.^c However, Bombay's connections permitted it to tap alternative sources further afar with the help of a merchant class capable of handling a considerable trade in grain. This merchant class already included a number of Indians trading on their own account.

It is not surprising that Forbes and Company and Bruce, Fawcett and Company should have been at the forefront of those who contracted to supply grain to Bombay during the famine. These two firms had been in existence since the last quarter of the 18th century and worked in close alliance with each other during the early 19th century.^d Their connections and influence with the Bombay government are well known.^e They were therefore able to wangle several tenders for providing grain to Bombay. We know that in 1804 Forbes and Company had got at least one contract for 10,000 bags of rice (1 bag = 168 lbs.) to be shipped from Bengal.^f In August 1804 a lengthy correspondence ensued between Forbes and Company, Bruce, Fawcett and Company, and some other firms and the Bombay government over the question of raising the price of rice originally stated in their tender.^g Initially, these firms had undertaken to supply rice at Rs 7 per bag. In August 1804 the Bombay government agreed to a price of Rs 9 per bag, though merchants kept grumbling that the price might rise to over Rs 12 per bag.^h It was reported that the prices at Calcutta had been going up due to increase in demand at Bombay,ⁱ which is significant being indicative of a certain orientation of the market. Sea-borne trade made the economic

Magistrates exercised their authority most arbitrarily, carrying terror "into the poorest hovel by his peons dispersed over the island".¹⁹³ Appeal against such arbitrariness was not easy. In a Kafkaesque episode, "on the October 6, 1817, a man ... was sentenced to hard labour till he should find securities. Under this sentence he remained in jail till

Appendix

integration of Bombay with Calcutta much easier. The cost for transporting grain from Calcutta to Bombay was estimated to be four rupees per bag, for a ship-load of 10,000 bags.^j Among the Indian merchants involved in this trade we have reference to Nasserwanjee Manockjee of Bombay who had been commissioned by Dorabjee Byramjee of Calcutta to dispose 29,000 bags of rice.^k Nasserwanjee Manockjee's name appears in the Bombay Directory of 1792 as one of the prominent merchants of the 'Persic Caste'.^l

Not without reason then a large number of people sought refuge in Bombay, where food was more easily available as was some sort of poor relief and employment through public works like road construction.^m Of course, typically capitalist vices like speculation in foodstocks and adulteration were very much in evidence.ⁿ

Notes

- (a) Among the causes of the Great Famine of 1803 in the Konkan was the partial failure of rains in 1802 and a more complete failure in 1803. See Campbell, *Materials*, Vol III, p 522. It might also be worth exploring a possible connection between colonial intervention and the famine.
- (b) Cf *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol VIII, p 407.
- (c) By the 1740s the company was regulating the grain trade of the Konkan to meet Bombay's growing demands (cf Lakshmi Subramanian, 'Bombay and the West Coast in the 1740s', *IESHR*, Vol XVIII, 2 (1981), p 216).
- (d) James Douglas, *Bombay and Western India*, Vol I (London, 1893), p 244.
- (e) Ibid, p 242; also Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, pp 24-5.
- (f) R Henshaw, Custom Master, Bombay, to J A Grant, Secretary, Bombay Government, August 20, 1804, Maharashtra State Archives (hereafter MSA), Grain Scarcity Records (hereafter GSR), Diary No 319.
- (g) Letter to Bombay Government, August 22, 1804, MSA, GSR, Diary No 319.
- (h) Ibid.
- (i) Ibid.
- (j) Ibid.
- (k) Letter to Henshaw, August 23, 1804, MSA, GSR, Diary No 319.
- (l) Douglas, *Bombay and Western India*, Vol I, p 168.
- (m) Cf MSA, GSR, Diary Nos 317-22, September 1803 to June 1806.
- (n) Letter to Grant, July 17, 1804, MSA, GSR, Diary No 319.

July 1823, a period of six years, when he died in jail".¹⁹⁴

Michel Foucault speaks of the "severe repression of illegality", out of all proportion to the offence, in bourgeois society: "The development of ports, the appearance of great warehouses in which merchandise was stored, the organisation of huge workshops... also necessitated a severe repression of illegality. The way in which wealth tended to be invested, on a much larger scale than before, in commodities and machines presupposed a systematic, armed intolerance of illegality".¹⁹⁵

The development of capitalism in Bombay was thus equipped to protect bourgeois property against petty-crime while, in a world of topsy-turvy morality, colonial and indigenous enterprise operating from the city merrily peddled opium to the Chinese.

Notes

[Financial assistance provided by the Indian Council of Historical Research is gratefully acknowledged.]

- 1 Gillian Tindall's, *City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay*, London, 1982.
- 2 "The British worked well with the Parsees of Bombay, ... who seemed to think more or less in the European manner, and were the first natives in India to play cricket ..." James Morris, *Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire* Harmondsworth, 1981, p 148.
- 3 K N Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760* (Cambridge, 1978), p 131.
- 3a Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale* (Sussex, 1974), p 146.
- 4 Cf A D King, *Colonial Urban Development* (London, 1976), pp 36ff.
- 5 On Delhi see *Ibid* and Narayani Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires, 1803-1931* (Delhi, 1981). Some other specific case studies on the subject are K L Gillion, *Ahmedabad, A Study in Indian Urban History* (Berkeley, 1978); Veena T Oldenburg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow, 1856-1877* (Princeton, 1984); Meera Kosambi, *Bombay and Poona: A Socio-Ecological Study of Two Indian Cities, 1650-1900* (Stockholm, 1980); Pamela Kanwar, *Imperial Simla: The Political Culture of the Raj* (Delhi, 1990); and Mariam Dossal, *Imperial Designs and Indian Realities: The Planning of Bombay City, 1845-1875*, (Bombay, 1991).
- 6 King, *Colonial Urban Development*, p 228.
- 7 Cf Suhash Chakravarty, *Anatomy of the Raj* (New Delhi, 1981), p 90.
- 8 See Partha Mitter, 'Architectural Planning and other Building Activities of the British in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta c 1630-c 1757' in Dilip Basu (ed), *The Rise and Growth of the Colonial Port Cities in Asia* (Berkeley, 1985), p 192.
- 9 See Amar Farooqui, 'Colonial Get-Away', Review of Kanwar, *Imperial Simla*, *Economic and Political Weekly* (hereafter, *EPW*) Vol XXVI, No 50, December 14, 1991, pp 2874-75.
- 10 It has a harbour with an effective area of about 194 square kilometres of shallow deep water, making it one of the most suitable places along the western coast of India for receiving and putting out ships. See O H K Spate and A T A Learmonth, *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography*, third edition (London, 1967), p 656.
- 11 The ghats are pierced by three passes: Tal, Nana and Bor. These make possible communication between the Konkan coast and the Deccan. At the northern end of the ghats, where the river Tapti flows towards the sea, another gap for communication is afforded.
- 12 R N Hamilton, Resident, Indore, to Crawford, Chairman, Great Indian Peninsular Railway Co, March 6, 1847, National Archives of India (hereafter NAI), Foreign Department (Political), No 89, April 24, 1847.
- 13 *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, July 10, 1840.
- 14 Cf K N Chaudhuri, *Trading World of Asia*, p 49.
- 15 Jean de Thevenot in S N Sen (ed), *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri* (Delhi, 1949), pp 8-9; *Travels in India* by Jean Baptiste Tavernier, tr V Ball, Vol I (London, 1889), pp 48-50, 68 and 71-72; Durate Barbosa, *The Book of Durate Barbosa*, tr M L Dames, Vol I (London, 1918), p 129; Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, c 1700-1750 (Wiesbaden, 1979), p 8; B G Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century: A Study in Urban History of Pre-Modern India* (Bombay, 1979), pp 73, 77, 78 and 80; and Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire* (Delhi, 1982), pp 25 and 58.
- 16 Cf Habib, *Atlas*, p 58.
- 17 Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, p 82.
- 18 F Warden, *Report on the Landed Tenures of Bombay*, August 20, 1814, *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government* (hereafter BGS), New Series, No 64 (Bombay, 1861), p 24.
- 19 John Burnell, *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne*, intro, and notes by S T Sheppard (London, 1933), p 61.
- 20 Holden Furber, *Bombay Presidency in the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Bombay, 1965), p 2.
- 21 Details of the early colonial history of Bombay are fairly well known. Suffice it to say that the 'Vasco da Gama era' of its history began with the arrival of the Portuguese at the island in 1509 and the establishment of their authority over it in 1534. The Portuguese made over Bombay to the British under provisions of the treaty of 1661 concluded on the occasion of the marriage of Charles II of Great Britain and Catherine Braganza of Portugal. The British crown managed to eventually get actual possession of the island in 1665, and in turn passed it on to the East India Company, for token Ponds 10 annual rent.
- 22 Das Gupta, *Decline of Surat*, p 8.
- 23 Cf Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, p 73.
- 24 The answer to this question is not necessarily easy or obvious. If, for instance, we regard the decline of Surat, in the words of David Hardiman, as being "bound up with the increasing penetration and control of India's external trade by European powers in the period after 1500" it might be possible to see the rise of Bombay as a triumph for British enterprise along the western coast. (David Hardiman, 'Elite Conflicts in a Trading Empire', Review of Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, *EPW*, Vol XVI, No 50, December 12, 1981, p 2039). In the case of Surat one is not entirely convinced that European penetration had indeed become decisive in the early 18th century. Das Gupta in a rejoinder has provided evidence indicating that in this period "European companies at Surat carried no more than one-eighth of the city's maritime commerce" (Ashin Das Gupta, 'Indian Merchants in the Age of Partnership, 1500-1800', Dwijendra Tripathi (ed), *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective*, New Delhi, 1984, p.30). It does appear that Gujarati commerce, especially with west Asia, was able to withstand the European onslaught till the beginning of the 18th century. Gujarati resilience has to be seen in terms of the strong presence of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires, the crisis at Surat beginning with the decline of these three empires around the turn of the 18th century.
- 25 Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol I (Cambridge, 1982), p 402.
- 26 Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis, 1976), pp 131-32 and 34.
- 27 Chaudhuri, *Trading World of Asia*, p 98.
- 28 Holden Furber, *John Company at Work* (Harvard, 1951), p 161.
- 29 *Ibid*, p 162.
- 30 P J Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1976), p 104.
- 31 E g, *Ibid*; Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade*, p 131; Chaudhuri, *Trading World of Asia*, p 98; Ashin Das Gupta, 'India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century' in Ashin Das Gupta and M N Pearson (eds), *India and the Indian Ocean: 1500-1800* (Calcutta, 1987), p.143.
- 32 In his earlier *John Company at Work* (p 164) and in his more recent *Rival Empires of Trade* (p 279), published in the same year as Marshall's *East Indian Fortunes*.
- 33 Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*, p 104.
- 34 *Ibid*.
- 35 Cornwallis to Henry Dundas, November 4, 1788, Charles Ross (ed), *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, Vol I, second edition (London, 1859), p.390.
- 36 *Ibid*.
- 37 Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in*

- Western India, 1784-1806* (Cambridge, 1970), p 23.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Trade between China and England with tea as the main commodity had been rapidly expanding right from the beginning of the 18th century. The Commutation Act of 1784 only gave further encouragement to it. K N Chaudhuri notes that the first decade of the 18th century "was the critical decade of take-off for tea consumption on a large scale", *Trading World of Asia*, p 388.
- 40 See Lakshmi Subramanian, 'Banias and the British: The Role of Indigenous Credit in the Process of Imperial Expansion in Western India, in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Asian Studies* (hereafter MAS), Vol. XXI, 3 (1987), p.485.
- 41 Fort William to Bombay Government, July 23, 1801, NAI, Home Department (hereafter HD), Misc Letters.
- 42 Subramanian, 'Banias and the British', pp 473-510.
- 43 Ibid, p.493. M Torri in a critique of Subramanian contends that the traditional sarraf network at Surat was on the verge of collapse towards the end of the 18th century "largely because of political and economic changes brought about by the rising colonial order". M Torri, 'Trapped Inside the Colonial Order: The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *MAS*, Vol XV, No 2 (1991), p 369.
- 44 *Report of the Royal Commission on Opium*, Vol VI (London, 1895), p 27.
- 45 See Amar Farooqui, 'Opium Enterprise and Colonial Intervention in Malwa and Western India, 1800-1824' (forthcoming in *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 1995).
- 46 Minute by J Malcolm, May 6, 1830, NAI, Separate Revenue Branch (henceforth SRB), No.23 of 7 September 1830; also Bombay Government to Supreme Government, December 5, 1829, NAI, SRB, No. 14 of January 12, 1830.
- 47 King, *Colonial Urban Development*, p 88.
- 48 Warden, *Report on the Landed Tenures*, p 73.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 James Campbell, *Materials Towards a Statistical Account of the Town and Island of Bombay*, Vol III (Bombay, 1894), p 525.
- 51 Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India* (Edinburgh, 1813), p 4.
- 52 Fort William to Bombay Government, 29 December 1805, NAI, HD, Misc Letters.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 'Census of Population of Islands of Bombay and Colabah taken in... 1826', *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, III (Bombay, 1840), p 72.
- 55 *Bombay Calendar and Almanac* (hereafter BCA) of 1838 (Bombay, 1838), p 121.
- 56 W H Sykes, *On the Census of the Islands of Bombay and Colabah* (Bombay, 1852), p 1.
- 57 A H Leith, *Report on the Sanitary State of the Island of Bombay*, BGS, new series, No.80, (Bombay 1864), p 46.
- 58 D R Gadgil, 'Origins of the Modern Indian Business Class: An Interim Report', New York, 1959, reprinted in S. Brahme (ed), *Writings and Speeches of D R Gadgil on Economic and Political Problems* (Pune, 1981), p 325, n 7. On the shortcomings of early census figures for Bombay see also Dossal, *Imperial Designs*, pp 24-25.
- 59 *Census of Bombay*, 1826, Table 1.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Campbell, *Materials*, Vol III, p 526.
- 62 *Census of Bombay*, 1826, Table 1.
- 63 Sykes, *Census*, p 1.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Ibid, p 2.
- 66 Warden, *Landed Tenures*, p 101.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 See Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (Harmondsworth, 1976), especially, chapter 3.
- 69 Cf Enzo Mingione, *Social Conflict and the City* (Oxford, 1981), p 91.
- 70 However in the 1860s the population of Bombay was "supposed to be formed in great part of immigrants as nearly one-half of the casualties reported in the Mortuary Returns were of persons whose birth-place was elsewhere' (Leith, *Sanitary State*, p 24). A great influx of labourers took place between 1860 and 1890 and in the 1880s only 23 per cent of the total population claimed the island as their birth-place, *Imperial Gazetteer of India* Vol VIII (Oxford, 1907), pp 411-12. There was considerable fluctuation in this period. The cotton boom of the early 1860s caused a growth in population, followed by a decline which was reflected in the census of 1872 (see Dossal, *Imperial Designs*, pp 210-11).
- 71 Sir E West, Chief Justice, King's Court, Bombay, 'Charge to the Grand Jury', 1825, in F D Drewitt, *Bombay in the Days of*

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- George IV: *Memoirs of Sir Edward West*, second revised edition (London, 1935), pp 188-89.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 The argument outlined in the writings of Manuel Castells and David Harvey on the complex problem of capitalist urban development has been found useful in formulating the urban question in the context of Bombay. See, especially, M. Castells' pioneering *The Urban Question* (London, 1977), and D Harvey, *The Urbanisation of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanisation* (Oxford, 1985).
- 74 *Character of Land Tenures and System of Survey and Settlement in the Bombay Presidency*, BGS, new series, No.278 (Bombay, 1908), p 15.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid, p 16.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Warden, *Landed Tenures*, p 24.
- 80 *Character of Land Tenures*, p 15.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Cf Ibid, p 16.
- 83 Resolution of November 1731, quoted in Warden, *Landed Tenures*, p 80.
- 84 Ibid, p 86.
- 85 *Character of Land Tenures*, p 15.
- 86 Warden, *Landed Tenures*, p 107.
- 87 Ibid, p 78.
- 88 Cf Ibid, p 36.
- 89 DE Wacha, *Shells from the Sands of Bombay* (Bombay, 1920), p 67.
- 90 Warden, *Landed Tenures*, pp 92-93.
- 91 Ibid, p 36.
- 92 Ibid, p 43.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Ibid, p 46.
- 96 Ibid, p 98.
- 97 Wacha, *Shells from the Sands*, p 102.
- 98 Warden, *Landed Tenures*, pp 96-99.
- 99 W Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, 2 Vols. (London, 1828), Vol I, p 258; Wacha, *Shells from the Sands*, p 104.
- 100 Cf Leith, *Sanitary State*, p 9; also, Mitter, 'Architectural Planning', p 191.
- 101 Mrs Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland From England... to India... in the years 1825, 26, 27, 28 etc*, Vol II (London, 1830), p 89.
- 102 Graham, *Journal*, p 12.
- 103 Ibid, pp 11-12.
- 104 Warden, *Landed Tenures*, p 100.
- 105 Elwood, *Narrative*, Vol II, pp 89-90.
- 106 Ibid, p 90.
- 107 Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, Vol I, p 258.
- 108 Warden, *Landed Tenures*, p 43.
- 109 *Bombay Calendar and General Directory* (hereafter BCGD) of 1849 (Bombay, 1849), p 265.
- 110 Leith, *Sanitary State*, p 9.
- 111 Cf Kosambi, *Bombay and Poona*, pp 91-92.
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, Vol I, p 434.
- 114 Wacha, *Shells from the Sands*, pp 85-87.
- 115 Ibid, pp 89-90.
- 116 Cf King, *Colonial Urban Development*, p 33.
- 117 Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life* (Bombay, 1911), p 49.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 Ibid.
- 120 Ibid.
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 Ibid.
- 123 Elwood, *Narrative*, Vol I, pp 378-79.
- 124 Leith, *Sanitary State*, p 9.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 Ibid, p 10.
- 127 Graham, *Journal*, pp.33-4. Tobacco and arrack were also important articles of consumption among the poorer sections of the population (see Warden, *Landed Tenures*, p 102).
- 128 BCGD, 1849, p 252. "Since 1827 the shop and stall tax had formed the backbone of Bombay's municipal finances. It was expected to pay for the costs of the municipal establishment, keep roads and tanks in repair and, since 1851, maintain a police force". Dossal, *Imperial Designs*, p 66.
- 129 Leith, *Sanitary State*, p 25. For a comprehensive discussion on Leith's report see Dossal, *Imperial Designs*, chapter 5.
- 130 Ibid, pp 14-15.
- 131 Ibid, p 13.
- 132 Russel Aitken, *Report on the Main Drainage of Bombay*, December 21, 1866 (Bombay, 1866), p 29.
- 133 Drewitt, *Bombay in the Days of George IV*, p 168.
- 134 Mariam Dossal, 'Henry Conybeare and the Politics of Centralised Water Supply in Mid-19th Century Bombay', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (hereafter IESHR), Vol XXV, 1 (1988), p 86.
- 135 Ibid, p 85.
- 136 Ibid, p 87.
- 137 Mingione, *Social Conflict*, p 52.
- 138 Cf Kosambi, *Bombay and Poona*, p 114.
- 139 Census of Bombay, 1826.
- 140 Graham, *Journal*, p 6.
- 141 *Bombay* (Fortnightly), Vol IX, 12 (1988).
- 142 A S LeMessurier, 'Report on Foras Lands', December 23, 1843, *Papers Connected with the Settlement etc of the Foras Lands in Bombay*, BGS, new series, No.3 (Bombay, 1854), p.2.
- 143 Ibid, pp 2-3.
- 144 Ibid, pp 6-7.
- 145 *Character of Land Tenures*, p 16.
- 146 LeMessurier, 'Report', pp 6-9.
- 147 Ibid, p 9.
- 148 Ibid.
- 149 Ibid, p 11.
- 150 Ibid, p 12.
- 151 Ibid, p 13.
- 152 'Final Report of Foras Commissioners', *Foras Papers*, p 40.
- 153 *Character of Land Tenures*, p 16.
- 154 Campbell, *Materials*, Vol III, p 525.
- 155 Census of Bombay, 1826.
- 156 C Rajagopalan, *The Greater Bombay: A Study in Suburban Ecology* (Bombay, 1962), p 19, n 2.
- 157 Pestanji Jehangir, *Report on the Leasehold and Certain Other Villages in the Salsette Taluka of the Thanna Collectorate*, 17 July 1872 (Bombay, 1875), p 1.
- 158 Ibid.
- 159 Bishop Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey Through The Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay*, 2 Vols. (London, 1828), Vol II, p 185.
- 160 Ibid, p 186.
- 161 Ibid.
- 162 Ibid, p 187. In 1827 the total population of Salsette island was estimated to be 53,255 (*Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, III, p 73).
- 163 'Report of Mr. Davies', March 1836, quoted in *Correspondence Relating to the Conditions on which Certain Estates are held in the Salsette Taluka etc*, BGS, new series, No 180 (Bombay, 1886), p 15.
- 164 *Correspondence Relating to etc Salsette*, pp 11-13 and 125.
- 165 Ibid, p 125.
- 166 Ibid, pp 12-20, 76, 119-20, 125-26 and 141.
- 167 Cf Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885* (London, 1972), pp 12-13.
- 168 Graham, *Journal*, p 45. In the second decade of the 19th century Pestonjee Bomanjee's landed property was valued at Rs 4,24,500; that of Hormasjee Bomanjee at Rs 3,12,300; of Ardaseer Dady at Rs 3,85,431; of Cursetjee Manockjee at Rs 94,300; of Moosa Mapla at Rs 1,69,200; and of Kesowdass Ransordass at Rs 1,14,500. Warden, *Landed Tenures*, pp 96-99.
- 169 Graham, *Journal*, p 6.
- 170 Elwood, *Narrative*, Vol I, p 365.
- 171 *BCA*, 1838, p 121; *BCGD*, 1842, Part III, pp 8-10; 1843, Part III, pp 8-10; 1844, Part II, pp 66-68; and 1851, pp 889-90.
- 172 *BCA*, 1844, Part II, p 68.
- 173 *BCA*, 1838, p 121.
- 174 *BCGD*, 1849, p 252.
- 175 Ibid.
- 176 *BCA*, 1842, Part III, p 67.
- 177 *BCGD*, 1849, p 948.
- 178 Wacha, *Shells from the Sands*, p 90.
- 179 Graham, *Journal*, p 24.
- 180 Ibid.
- 181 Elwood, *Narrative*, Vol I, p 393.
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- 185 Ibid, pp 254-55.
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- 187 R E Park, 'The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment', Park et al, *The City* (Chicago, 1968), p 9.
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- 191 Ibid, p 191.
- 192 Ibid, p 194.
- 193 Ibid, p 202.
- 194 Ibid, p 195.
- 195 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1985), p 85.